

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATING COUPLES ABOUT THE ROLE OF TELEWORKING IN COUPLE SATISFACTION

Andreea GÎRNET¹

Abstract: *The aim of this research is to investigate the implications that personality, from a Big5 perspective, can have on the satisfaction felt in the couple, as well as job satisfaction in the context of teleworking. The present study presents a correlational and comparative design, non-experimental. Participants (N = 126) were collected online, representing people who were in a relationship and who had to work from home, on whom a personality measurement inventory and two satisfaction level measuring instruments were applied. The results recorded that aspects of personality such as extraversion, agreeableness and openness to experience have managed to significantly predict job satisfaction.*

Key words: *personality, teleworking, couple satisfaction, job satisfaction, Big5.*

1. Introduction

Personality is a topic often debated in psychological studies and approached by many researchers. Studies show us how environment and personality intersect the other and can influence interpersonal relationships. So, starting from this principle and based on the pandemic events that have taken place since 2020, the present research aims to investigate the role of personality in couple satisfaction and job satisfaction in the context of teleworking. Personality, from the Big5 perspective, has been carefully studied by many researchers. Following the paradigm of John, Naumann & Soto (2008) on the Five Factor Model (Big5), the popularity of this perspective of personality has grown and become of great interest to researchers. The five factors of the model are given by extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, and openness to experience.

Thus, there are various studies whose objectives we find in the current study. In the research of Vittersø, J. et al. since 2002, the impact that work from home can have on

¹ West University of Timisoara, Timisoara, Romania andreea.girnet97@e-uvt.ro, corresponding author

the quality of life for both employees and their partners has been studied empirically. If the results showed a significant positive correlation between work from home and feeling of employment in the case of employees ($r = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$), in terms of their partners, there was a significant negative correlation between one's work from home partner and the satisfaction with the life of the other partner ($r = -0.27$, $p < 0.05$). Also another empirical study conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic period, but in which there are children implicated, shows us that when both partners work from home, they end up spending more often a long time together, but women with children between 0 and 5 years old end up having the lowest level of satisfaction with life due to the care of children while they have to work, especially if the partner still has to work outside the home. A good communication with the partner regarding their needs, avoiding conflictual situation with the partner can improve the psychological well-being of all family members in these times (Sirbu, Vintila, Tisu, Stefanut, Tudorel, Maguran, Toma, 2020). The quality of the relationship with the partners is crucial for their emotional connection, and a positive language contributes to increasing the quality of their relationship (Trancă, Neagoe, 2018). Furthermore, it is well – known that women's behavior differs considerably from the behavior of men. In this regard, considering that in a relationship, partners always use certain methods in order to influence the behavior or attitude of their partner, in a process of persuasion women are more prudent and they pay more attention to their actions (Coman, 2007, p.94). Compared to their partners, women will have to sacrifice more time for household activities while men will be more likely to spend more time with family and get more involved in pleasant aspects of family life than in domestic ones (Del Boca, Oggero, Prophet, & Rossi, 2020). Furthermore, women are included in the vulnerable groups, when employment is considered, education and a better partnership between community, business environment and the education environment could help change this perspective (Goian, Vasiluta, 2013). Career options are in connection with self-perceived values and attitudes, but can be greatly influenced by environment and context, as is this particular situation in the pandemic (Runcan, Goian, 2013).

Mental health problems have been documented by most of the studies analyzing the COVID-19 situation. We can compare it with the effects of a serious, life-threatening disease as is cancer, the effects being high levels of anxiety, depression, lower life-quality (Stefanut, Vintila, 2019).

Another study, conducted in France, investigated the implications of spending time at home in the well-being of the couple's partners. The results showed that domestic activities were not divided evenly and the women continued to do the "hard" work. The men got involved in household activities only when they had free time and did activities such as shopping or played with children (Champeaux & Marchetta, 2021). Also, referring to the time spent working and the time spent with the partner, those people who will give extra time to work will be more prone to negative emotions and feelings of guilt in neglecting household chores. In the same way, the negotiation of time spent with the partner and the time spent working becomes a subject of conflict between the couple's partners, which will lead to a decrease in the couple's satisfaction (Ojala, Nätti & Anttila, 2014).

In terms of personality in relation with couple and work satisfaction, in the context of teleworking, the studies are quite limited but some aspects are worth mentioning. In research that focused on the relationship between work from home, personality and job satisfaction, the results showed a higher level of satisfaction for people who work five days a week from home compared to those who work three days or less. However, there was no significant difference between people with increased extraversion and those with a low extraversion in terms of job satisfaction. It also seems that there would be a positive correlation between conscientiousness and job satisfaction. This can be explained by the specifics of conscientiousness, a dimension in which organized people find themselves, diligent and persistent in performance, which makes them ideal candidates for work from home (Smith, Patmos & Pitts, 2018).

At the level of the couple's relationship, the personality finds a characteristic role here as well. However, the topic of teleworking has been precariously debated by the literature, we will refer to those aspects of personality specific to the Big5 Model and how they are found in the frame satisfaction in the couple and at work. For example, in the study of Solomon et al., 2014, the role of the couple partners' personality in job satisfaction and in the couple's relationship was investigated. It seems that those people with a high level of extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness were associated with a high level of job satisfaction, while those with a high level of neuroticism were associated with a low level of job satisfaction. Also, a high level of conscientiousness was associated with a high degree of satisfaction in the couple's relationship. In the study of Watson and Hubbard & Wiese (2000), conscientiousness and agreeableness highly predicted the best satisfaction in the couple.

Therefore, given all that is presented and the quantitative lack of previous studies to relate all three elements studied, personality, couple and job satisfaction, there is an urgent need to research the implications of personality in the standard of living of the couple in an atypical context until now, that of the work performed from home.

2. Methods

2.1. Design

In the case of the present research, the study presents a correlational, comparative and non-experimental design. Data were collected from a single sample of subjects at a time, by applying an online questionnaire, being thus a cross-sectional study.

2.2. Participants

The participants (N = 126) in the study were represented by the general population, with ages aged between 18 and 50 who met the eligibility criteria for participation. They took note of the informed consent and provided demographic data of identification (gender, age, occupational status, relationship status, etc.). The eligibility criteria implied participants over the age of 18, being in a relationship and having a job in which they are

allowed or required to work from home (teleworking), whether it is about a job done entirely from home or in a hybrid system. The average of the female participants was 88.9% and the male ones, 11.1%. One can, therefore, observe a considerable gender difference, with women predominating in the group of subjects. All participants were Romanian citizens and came from different socio-economic backgrounds.

2.3. Instruments

IPIP-50 or International Personality Item Pool (Goldberg, 1999), represents the instrument used in this research to measure personality from the perspective Big5. This tool focuses on the five dimensions of personality from Goldberg's perspective. With a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = Total disagreement and 5 = Total agreement, each dimension of personality is measured by a set of 10 items, together managing to compose a total of 50 items. The instrument was also validated on the Romanian population, so that, in the research of Rusu et. al (2012), we can observe the values of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for each dimension. Emotional stability will have an internal consistency of $\alpha = .84$, Extraversion $\alpha = .84$, Openness to experience $\alpha = .75$, Agreeableness $\alpha = .73$ and Conscientiousness $\alpha = .78$. In the present research we can observe statistically good values of consistency internally. Thus, the Extraversion manages to obtain a value of the internal consistency of $\alpha = .87$, Openness to experience obtained $\alpha = .80$, Agreeableness $\alpha = .74$, Conscientiousness, $\alpha = .71$ and Neuroticism, the exact opposite of Emotional Stability, obtained the value of $\alpha = .85$.

Minnesota Questionnaire Scale (Weiss, Dawis & England, 1967), more precisely, its short version is the instrument used to measure workplace satisfaction of the participants. The tool contains 20 items and asks the subject to evaluate on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1 = Very Dissatisfied and 5 = Very Satisfied) how satisfied they are with certain aspects of their current job. In the present research, the value of internal consistency for the variable overall job satisfaction is $\alpha = .89$. At the level of intrinsic job satisfaction we observe a value of $\alpha = .78$ and the extrinsic satisfaction manages to obtain the value of $\alpha = .85$. There are, therefore, statistically acceptable values of internal consistency in the case of the latter tool used.

The Relationship Satisfaction Scale (Røysamb & Vittersø & Tambs, 2014) was used for measuring the satisfaction felt in the couple's relationship. The tool contains 10 items, being translated from English into Romanian, without being validated at the level of the Romanian population. A Likert scale from 1 to 6 was also used, in which 1 = Strong Disagreement and 6 = Strong Agreement. In the case of the present study, internal consistency obtained a value of $\alpha = .90$, thus presenting a very good value from a statistical point of view.

2.4. Procedure

The research instruments were applied through a questionnaire created and distributed online. Data were collected only once, from a single sample of subjects, on

which no observational, randomization or manipulation interventions took place. Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, which comprises several elements such as: the programs that the package includes, the data that the researcher wants to assess, different commands and options which help the researcher conduct the analysis, and the results of the analysis (Coman & Netedu, 2011, p.123).

3. Results

3.1. H1. Personality Dimensions will Predict Job Satisfaction

Based on the literature, the present hypothesis wants to identify which one is the strongest predictor in the case of the criterion given by job satisfaction. Considering other studies, the predictors selected were extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to the experience. Thus, following a simultaneous multilinear regression analysis, all predictors were introduced at the same time into the regression model. The results showed a predictive pattern statistically significant, $r = .297$, with Test $F(3,122) = 3.44$, $p = .019$ ($p < .05$), managing to explain the predictive phenomenon better than the average. Also, the explained variance is found in a percentage of 7.8% ($r^2 = .078$), and if we are to identify which of the three dimensions of personality best predict job satisfaction, the first place is the agreeableness ($b = .462$, $p = .042$), followed by extraversion ($b = .168$, $p = .269$) and openness to experience ($b = .165$, $p = .420$) coming close. It is noticeable how agreeability is the strongest predictor in the case of the model of regression presented (according to Table 1).

Simultaneous multilayer regression for predictive purpose

Table 1

	Job Satisfaction
Agreeability	.042*
Extraversion	.269
Openness to the experience	.420
R^2	.078
F	.019*
$N=126$, *$p<.05$	

3.2. H2. There are differences in terms of couple satisfaction, in the case of those who work a different number of days at home.

In this hypothesis we want to identify the differences between the number of days in which subjects work from home, in relation to couple satisfaction. Following Anova's analysis of comparison of the groups, the results showed insignificant differences in terms number of days per week worked from home, at the level of satisfaction in the couple, $F(4,121) = 1.81$, $p = .131$. It is thus noticeable how the F test fails to make more adequate estimates than the average. Taking an overall look, one can see how the most satisfied subjects are those who work 3 days from home, followed by those who work 5

days and in the last place are those who work 4 days at home (*Table 2*).

Table 2
Comparison of couple satisfaction, depending on the number of days worked at home

	1 day			2 days			3 days			4 days			5 days		
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Couple satisfaction	47.38	11.69	16	49.33	6.50	6	52.0	8.01	10	46.0	9.99	15	51.61	8.41	79

ANOVA

Table 3

	The sum of the squares	df	The average of the squares	F
Inter-group	583.74	4	145.93	1.81
Intra-group	9755.91	121	80.62	
Total	10339.65	125		

4. Discussion

The aim of this paper was to investigate the impact of personality on couple and work satisfaction, keeping the context of teleworking, but also how these variables relate to each other. Being very interested in following which are the elements that predict the best job satisfaction, it is clear how this study manages to express a model of multiple regression, for predictive purposes, with statistically significant results. It notes how a model with predictors such as agreeableness, extraversion, and openness to experience, manage to present job satisfaction and even offer a variance explained in proportion of 7.8%. The results are also supported by previous studies, agreeableness being the predictor that obtains the best predictive results (Watson, D. and Hubbard, B., & Wiese, D., 2000). An explanation in this regard can be given by the fact that for those with increased agreeableness, the transition from physical to online work did not mean a radical change, people like that try rather to conform to the new context in order to achieve as much as possible and work well without allowing themselves to be affected by the level of their work satisfaction.

Succeeding in creating a relationship between couple satisfaction and the number of days that the subjects had to work from home, there are statistically insignificant differences in the level satisfaction in the couple, considering the number of days of teleworking. But, according to the analysis emerged, the most satisfied subjects would be those who work 3 or 5 days from home, an element found also in previous studies and one explaining that there may be couples who prefer to always be together and even to do their work exclusively from home, allocating the necessary time to the family or partner, but also couples who feel prevented from spending all their time in the same place with the partner, but rather to have different contexts in terms of work and the

couple (Smith, Patmos & Pitts, 2018).

It is observed how, through the present research, teleworking did not necessarily mean something negative for the couples. They presented high levels of couple satisfaction and elements of their personality were able to explain, even to predict, the satisfaction felt in the couple, respectively in the work done in the context of teleworking.

5. Limitations

Although some significant results are noted, the present study also faces some limitations. Regarding the participants, there is a small number of male subjects and a predominance of females, making it quite difficult to say that the results obtained apply to both sexes in a similar way.

At the same time, the research used the answers from some individual subjects, who are in a couple relationship, without controlling and getting answers from their partners. So, future research might focus on measurements within couples, but not just on one of the partners, for extra validity offered to the study. In this way, the balance males versus females could be maintained. As for the number of subjects and their collection, this step can be facilitated by access to institutions where employees still work from home, such as large IT organizations, human resources, etc., thus managing to gather a large number of participants and increasing confidence in the results subsequently obtained.

In the same way, the presence of social desirability is noticeable. Even if the instructions mentioned to choosing the answer suitable for the structure of personality of each individual, some of them may be tempted to create the ideal image of their personality, but not exactly the real one. Also, in terms of measuring couple satisfaction, the instrument does not visibly have the interrogation of the negative dimension of the couple relationship, thus there may be a possibility of shaping a very positive image of the satisfaction felt in relationships even if not in line with reality. Further research could be considered introduction of an instrument for measuring social desirability. From here, a new limit is observed, more precisely at the level of the instruments used. Outside of IPIP-50, which is translated and validated on the Romanian population, the other two instruments do not enjoy this status. These have been translated from English into Romanian, without being validated on the Romanian population. Also, the instrument of measuring satisfaction in the relationship does not evaluate the whole structure of a couple relationship, the subjects may be tempted to hyperbolize the positive dimensions of their couple relationship.

6. Theoretical and Practical Implications

At a practical level, this paper manages to find its utility in the field of contemporary research, focused on the implications of the pandemic phenomenon on the population. Lately, studies focused on the COVID-19 phenomenon began to create rudimentary observations on the life of family and couple, in a new dynamic context. It has thus

become interesting to watch the impact created on the couple's life, in relation to the well-being at work, managing to complete research in the field and providing additional knowledge of the ramifications and changes produced by the pandemic situation, considering the personality structure of each individual involved in study.

At the same time, at the level of the couple, the present study serves its utility within psychotherapy and couple education. As mentioned in this research, many couples have experienced a close bond while others, a visible emotional separation within teleworking periods. Thus, there may be couples for whom the therapeutic demand is precisely the presence of conflict generated by working from home, some partners even dedicating excessive time to working and ignoring the couple, thus leading to conflict. There are some elements which could easily improve the mental well-being of both partners, as are healthy eating habits, more time spent in natural environments, and learning to adequately communicate in the couple and in the family even on sensitive subjects and in these difficult times (Goian, 2013; Swami, Khatib, Vidal-Mollon, Vintila, Barron, Goian, Mayoral, Toh, Tudorel & Vazirani, 2020; Vintila, Todd, Goian, Tuodrel, Barbat & Swami, 2020). All this can be provided by psychoeducation, as well as this could be done for aspects about how our personality structure can have a role that interferes with our work and the couple's relationship, thus finding an explanation of possible conflicts between partners, but also in the opposite direction, such as certain dimensions of personality can be factors in building the satisfaction of the couple.

7. Conclusions

The main aim of this study was to investigate the personality implications of Big5 perspective, in the context of couple satisfaction and job satisfaction, in the context of teleworking. It was possible to observe how personality dimensions, such as agreeableness, extraversion, and openness to experience, managed to predict the satisfaction felt in the couple.

However, in the case of Swami, Khatib, Vidal-Mollon, Vintila, Barron, Goian, Mayoral, Toh, Tudorel & Vaziranier work about days per week, worked from home, there were no significant differences in terms of satisfaction in the couple. However, as in previous studies, it is observed how those who work 3 or 5 days from home will present a higher level of satisfaction in the couple, in an online context.

Therefore, this research succeeds in encompassing the interaction of personality aspects in relation to couple satisfaction, as well as the satisfaction felt at work, in the context of teleworking. Also, together with additional research in the field, early developing research directions in terms of online activities and their impact on the couple's relationship can be created.

References

Brough, P., O'Driscoll, M. P., & Kalliath, T. J. (2005). The ability of 'family friendly' organizational resources to predict work-family conflict and job and family

- satisfaction. *Stress and Health: Journal of the International Society for the Investigation of Stress*, 21(4), 223-234.
- Champeaux, H., & Marchetta, F. (2021). *Couples in lockdown, "La vie en rose"? Evidence from France*. Retrieved from <https://hal.uca.fr/hal-03149087/file/E%26D12.pdf>.
- Coman, C. (2007). *Negotiation techniques*. Bucharest: CH Beck.
- Coman, C., & Netedu, A. (2011). *Statistics applied in the Social Sciences*. București: European Institute.
- Constantinescu, P. M., & Constantinescu, I. (2016). The adaptation of the Big-Five IPIP-50 questionnaire in Romania revisited. *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov*, 9(58), 129-138.
- Cooke, L. P. (2006). "Doing" gender in context: Household bargaining and risk of divorce in Germany and the United States. *American Journal of Sociology*, 112(2), 442- 472.
- Del Boca, D., Oggero, N., Profeta, P., & Rossi, M. (2020). Women's and men's work, housework and childcare, before and during COVID-19. *Review of Economics of the Household*, 18(4), 1001-1017.
- Dewitte, M., Otten, C., & Walker, L. (2020). Making love in the time of corona—considering relationships in lockdown. *Nature Reviews Urology*, 17(10), 547-553.
- Doss, B. D., Simpson, L. E., & Christensen, A. (2004). Why do couples seek marital therapy?. *Professional psychology: Research and practice*, 35(6), 608.
- Gere, J., MacDonald, G., Joel, S., Spielmann, S. S., & Impett, E. A. (2013). The independent contributions of social reward and threat perceptions to romantic commitment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 105(6), 961.
- Goian, C., (2010), Zece categorii de inconsecvente semantice prezente in limbajul asistentei sociale din spatial romanesc. *Social Worker Magazine*, 1, 79-90.
- Goian, C., Vasiluta, M. (2013). Professionalisation through the master's degree in social economy - a dimension of the partnership between communities, the business environment and the university educational environment. *Journal of Social Economy*, 175-187.
- Ojala, S., Nätti, J., & Anttila, T. (2014). Informal overtime at home instead of telework: Increase in negative work-family interface. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 34 (1/2), 69-87.
- Parasuraman, S., & Simmers, C. A. (2001). Type of employment, work-family conflict and well-being: a comparative study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, 22(5), 551-568.
- Runcan, PL, Goian, C. (2013). Career Aspirations of Social Work Students from Romania, *Social Worker Magazine*, 1, 103-112.
- Rusbult, C. E., & Buunk, B. P. (1993). Commitment processes in close relationships: An interdependence analysis. *Journal of social and personal relationships*, 10(2), 175-204.
- Sadeghi, M. A., Mousavi, J., Mootabi, F., & Dehghani, M. (2016). Couple's personality similarity and marital satisfaction. *Contemporary Psychology, Biannual Journal of the Iranian Psychological Association*, 10(2), 67-82.

- Sirbu, A., Vintila, M., Tisu, L., Stefanut, AM, Tudorel, O, Maguran, B., Toma, RA, 2020). Parental Alienation- Development and validation of a behavior anchor scale, *Sustainability*, 13, 1-18.
- Smith, S. A., Patmos, A., & Pitts, M. J. (2018). Communication and teleworking: A study of communication channel satisfaction, personality, and job satisfaction for teleworking employees. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 55(1), 44- 68.
- Smith, S. A., Patmos, A., & Pitts, M. J. (2018). Communication and teleworking: A study of communication channel satisfaction, personality, and job satisfaction for teleworking employees. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 55(1), 44- 68.
- Solomon, B. C., & Jackson, J. J. (2014). The long reach of one's spouse: Spouses' personality influences occupational success. *Psychological Science*, 25(12), 2189-2198
- Stefanut, A, Vintila, M. (2019). Exploring the depression, anxiety, quality of life and self-efficacy of oncological patients and their caregivers: a literature review. *Social Research Reports*, 11(1), 104-116.
- Swami, V., Khatib, NAM, Vidal-Mollon, J., Vintila, M., Barron, D., Goian, C., Mayoral, O., Toh, EKL, Tudorel, O. & Vazirani, S. (2020). Visits to Natural Environments Improve State Body Appreciation: Evidence from Malaysia, Romania and Spain. *Ecopsychology*, 12(1).
- Trancă, L. M., Neagoe, A. (2018). The importance of positive language for the quality of interpersonal relationships. *Agora Psycho-Pragmatica*, 12(1): 69-77.
- Vintila, M., Todd, J. Goian, C., Tuodrel, O., Barbat, CA &Swami, V. (2020). The Romanian Version of the Intuitive Eating Scale-2: Assessment of its psychometric properties and gender Invariance in Romanian Adults, *Body Image*, 35, 225-236.
- Vittersø, J., Akselsen, S., Evjemo, B., Julsrud, T. E., Yttri, B., & Bergvik, S. (2003). Impacts of home-based telework on quality of life for employees and their partners. Quantitative and qualitative results from a European survey. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 4(2), 201-233.
- Watson, D., Hubbard, B., & Wiese, D. (2000). General traits of personality and affectivity as predictors of satisfaction in intimate relationships: Evidence from self-and partner-ratings. *Journal of personality*, 68(3), 413-449.